



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Meeting Minutes
November 9, 2010 – 7:30pm

Attendance

Commission Members: Daphne Collins (Chair), Jack Leader (Secretary), Jerry Adams, Jane Ives, Peter Kai Jung Lew, John Pears, Chris Steele

Staff: Amanda Stout (Sr. Economic Development Planner)

Guests: Bill Renke, Anatol Zukerman

Absent: Philip Plottel (Vice Chair), Matt Cuddy, Charles Eisenberg, Robert Gifford,

Agenda Items

1. EDC Business

- Vote on October 12, 2010 Minutes. Motion to approve (4-0-2) (Lew, seconded by Adams).

2. Bill's Pizzeria

- Petition #266-10, BILL'S HOUSE OF PIZZA, INC. d/b/a Bill's Pizzeria for a SPECIAL PERMIT/SITE PLAN APPROVAL for a restaurant in excess of 50 seats (from 33 to 57 seats) and to waive 9 parking stalls at 751-753 Beacon Street, Newton Centre.
- After meeting with the president of Bill's Pizzeria, Dean Chronopoulos, and his legal counsel, Steve Buchbinder, at the October 12th EDC meeting, Daphne Collins wrote a letter stating the Commission's support of the special permit. The letter was sent to the Land Use Committee in advance of the Public Hearing, which was held on November 9th.
- EDC members again expressed a desire for a thorough parking study of Newton Centre, since there has been a marked increase in special permit applications regarding parking waivers recently. John Pears noted that discussions regarding the Cypress Street site in Newton Centre are moving forward and that Mayor Warren is supportive of exploring ways to solve the area's parking problems. Amanda Stout reiterated that the Transportation Advisory Committee, which includes a Parking Subcommittee co-chaired by Matt Cuddy, is taking a comprehensive look at parking policy in the City. Additionally, planning and engineering staff continue to study solutions for in-lieu fees and parking management. Members noted that parking has long been a problem in Newton Centre, and they would like to comment on subcommittee reports or other policies in the future.

3. Needham Street

- Amanda Stout updated the Commission on the progress of the MIT graduate students who are studying the Needham Street corridor during the fall semester. EDC members noted that these conversations about the future of Needham Street are very important both to that corridor and to neighborhoods throughout the City. The EDC would like to continue to participate in such discussions.

4. Feasibility Analysis Working Group

- Chris Steele updated the Commission, explaining that the Working Group continues to move forward with building a framework for analysis of development sites in general and of the Firefighters' Triangle site in particular. Philip Plottel and Chris Steele are building a cost model that uses a variety of inputs (e.g. cost of construction, cost of land, tax revenue, cost to



CITY OF NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

renovate station) that will provide them with data to conduct a cost/benefit analysis of potential development scenarios on the site. The group acknowledged that some of the numbers are fuzzy and that there are certainly non-financial concerns involved, but that they are trying to perform a fiscal analysis to provide feedback on the optimal use for this City owned site.

- John Pears questioned the economic feasibility analysis that was included in the Request for Information (RFI) for the Austin Street site, suggesting that a fiscally-accurate estimate of the development potential for a site is a critical piece of decision-making for the City.
- Anatol Zukerman questioned the working group's process of analysis and timeline for completion of the study.

5. Other Updates

- Business Improvement District (BID) in Newton Centre – Daphne Collins has made contact with some outside experts who are interested in being a part of the discussion. She continues to work with Ald. Vicki Danberg and Amanda Stout on this project.
- Austin Street – Amanda Stout reported that the Department of Public Works has officially declared the site surplus. The EDC would like to stay involved with the project as it moves through the Real Property Reuse process.
- Membership – Mayor Warren is still seeking applications from prospective new members to join the EDC. EDC members were supportive of Joyce Moss joining the Commission. Amanda Stout will look into membership issues generally.
- Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) – Jack Leader, who is a member of the EDAC, reported that the idea of merging the EDAC under the umbrella of the EDC was discussed at the last EDAC meeting. The City's Law Department is ironing out some legal issues (involving the Open Meeting Law and confidentiality of EDAC matters), but there is support for the merger from the Mayor, Planning and Development staff, the EDC, and the EDAC.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Amanda Stout, AICP

Senior Economic Development Planner